ISSN 0712-7774

$2.00 USA ● $2.50 CANADA ● £1 UK

CEREBUS

MARVEL and DECEASE

110
MAY

N O T E • F R O M • T H E P R E S I D E N T

This is probably as close as I will ever come to the cliché "Mm. What will I write about this month?" note. You know the one I mean . . . for a while at DC it was something of a fixture in their books. Editors admitting outright they had nothing to say, a few cute paragraphs on what they considered writing about and a sheepish closing where they promised next time they would say something (of course they never did, but that's another story). My thoughts this time out are not **that** fatuous (I hope), but, still and all, we are at least nodding in that direction (if not nodding off altogether).

The Note from the President is something of a strain. Or, at least has been since I've moved from the public service announcement format ("Attention, shoppers . . . Cerebus **will** be appearing with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles in issue 8 of TMNT. We repeat . . .") to something remotely approximately a short essay. It seems that I'm always thinking of something in the course of the day and remarking to whomever is close at hand (usually myself) "Mm. Might make a good Note from the President". Alas, when it comes time to actually compose one, there's usually not an idea to be found — or writing exhaustively on a given subject I find it fills two or three lines. The temptation to write a Note from the President is usually greatest when I'm in the worst imaginable mood. The old nothing-matters-and-what-if-it-did, mad-at-the-world, doom-and-gloom funk. At those times I'll grab a pen and write "You want to know what it's like to be Dave Sim? Huh? Listen up, you fuckheads, and I'll **tell** you."

The thing that keeps me from actually running one of those (aside from space limitations . . . they usually run fifteen-or-so single-spaced pages) is that I am very persuasive in arguing a viewpoint (oh, you'd noticed). Once I get really wound up on the subject of how shitty everything is, you'd be hard-pressed to see any value to going on living. And considering that most of the readership of Cerebus (at least judging by the ones I meet at cons and what-not) is like me . . . anti-social, manic-depressive loners with delusions of grandeur (and a side order of borderline schizophrenia; hold the perspective for good measure) . . . I'd be afraid of a rash of suicides occurring over a two or three week period.

Would that be wild?

"Yessir, officer. He kept to himself mostly. A quiet boy. We found this comic book with most of the front cover bit off. Yessir, he read it all the time. Almost . . . religiously."

Me, flying all over the country. Two thousand subpoenas to appear at two thousand inquests into two thousand suicides.

"Now, Mr. Sim. This character of yours. This Siberius. I under**stand** that he is a (shuffling through papers) . . . an aardvark . . . Pope. Is that correct?"

Screaming mothers and family members.

"That's the one! THAT'S HIM! HE TOOK MY BAAABEEE! HIM and that that **CERBERNUS**!!"

ABC. Nightline.

"But, surely, Mr. Sim you must have **known** that all these young people would kill themselves. **Surely**."

"Oh. Well. I wouldn't . . ."

". . . Hold that thought, Mr. Sim. We have to pause for this message. We'll be right back."

TIME: "Degenerate Sparks Comic Book Related Deaths" NEWSWEEK: "Comics No Longer for Kids . . . Comics for Suicide."

So, you see, that's why I always try to keep the Note from the President sort of low-key.

Seriously.

Dave Sim will attend Memphis Mini-Con, June 18-19, Wilson World Hotel, Memphis, TN.

CEREBUS

NO. 110 MAY 1988

DAVE SIM
President

GERHARD
Backgrounds, cover-colour, and tones

KAREN McKIEL
Administrator

Circulation
31,000

CHURCH AND STATE
a novel

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 52 to Cerebus 56)
Aprés State

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 57 to Cerebus 63)
Back to Iest

•

BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 64 to Cerebus 80)
Church and State

•

BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 81 to Cerebus 89)
The Sacred Wars

•

BOOK FIVE
(Cerebus 90 to Cerebus 101)
Astoria

•

BOOK SIX
(Cerebus 102 to Cerebus 106)
The Final Ascension

•

BOOK SEVEN
(Cerebus 107 to Cerebus 111)
Walking On The Moon

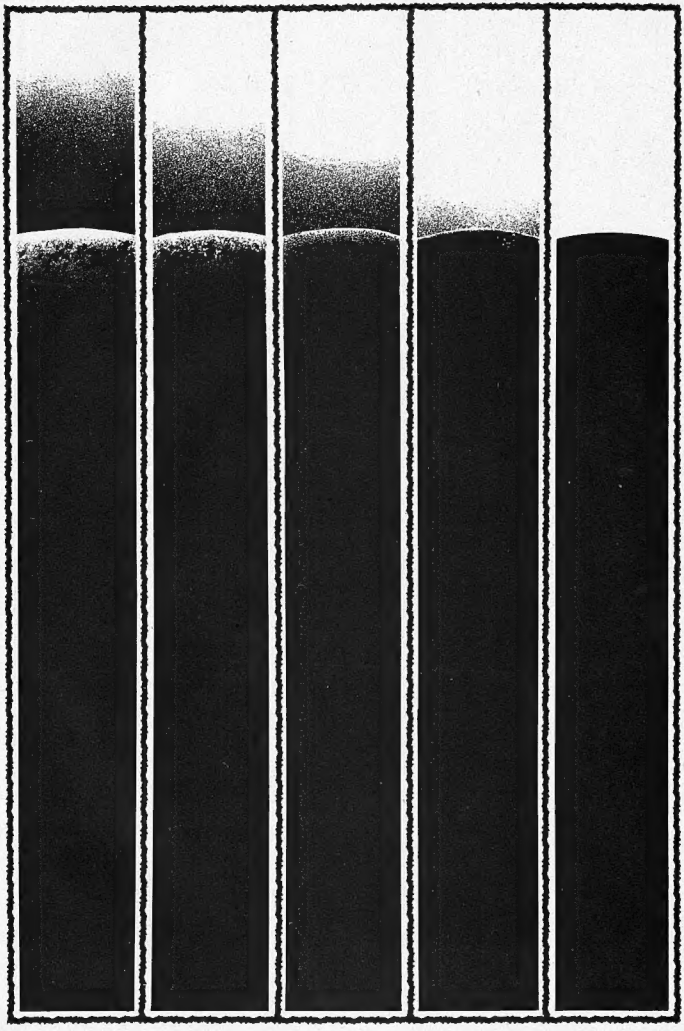
•

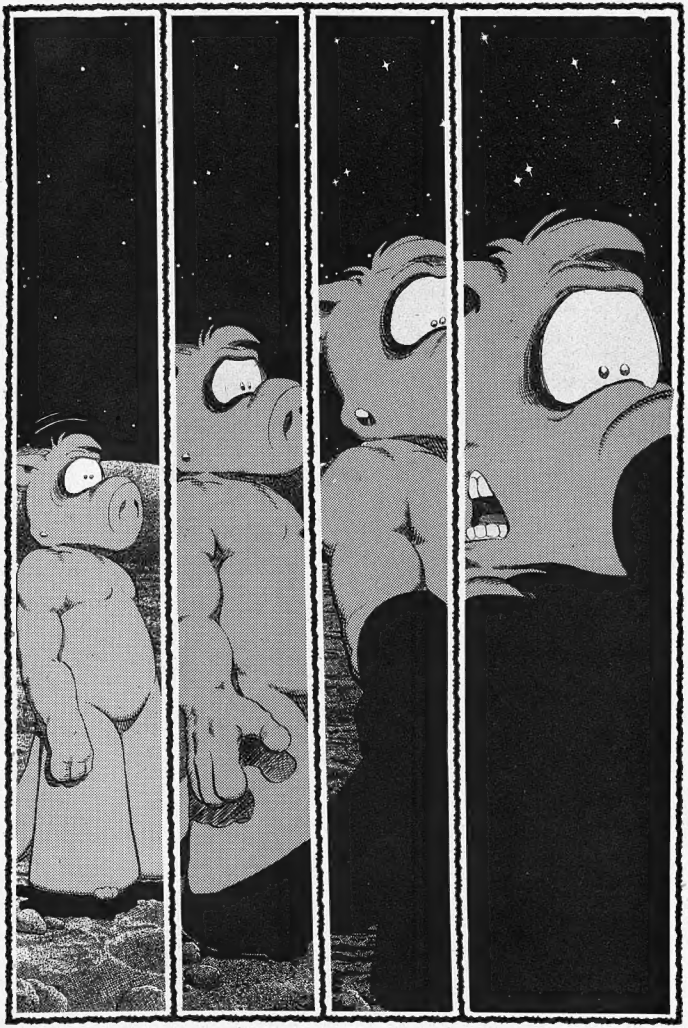
CEREBUS IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY AARDVARK-VANAHEIM INC. PO BOX 1674 STN. C KITCHENER ONTARIO CANADA N2G 4R2

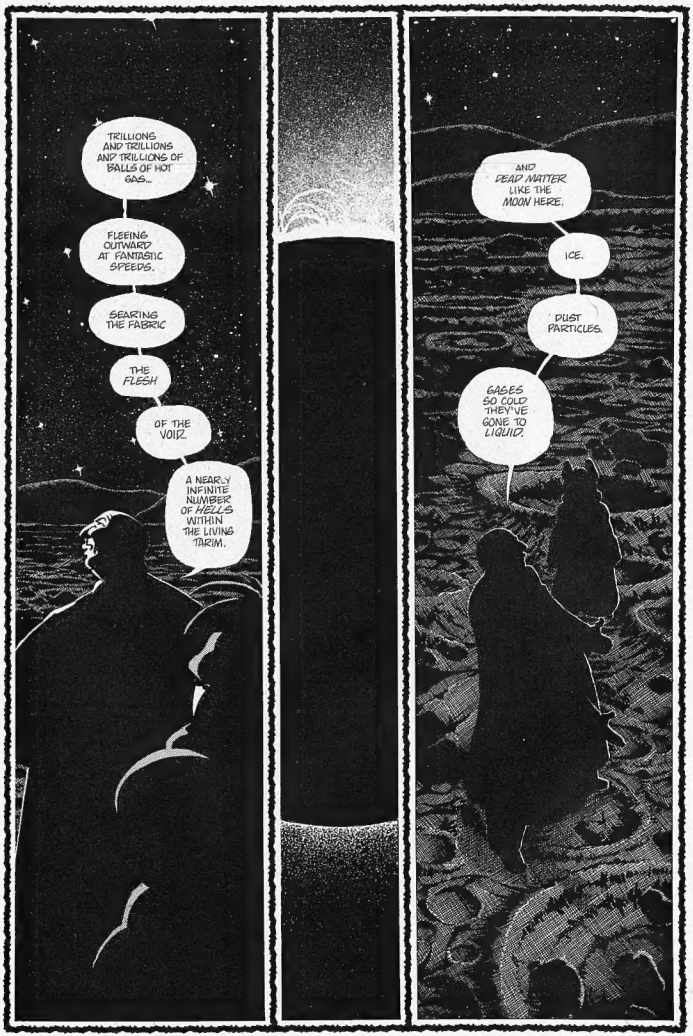
ALL CONTENTS ©1988 DAVE SIM.

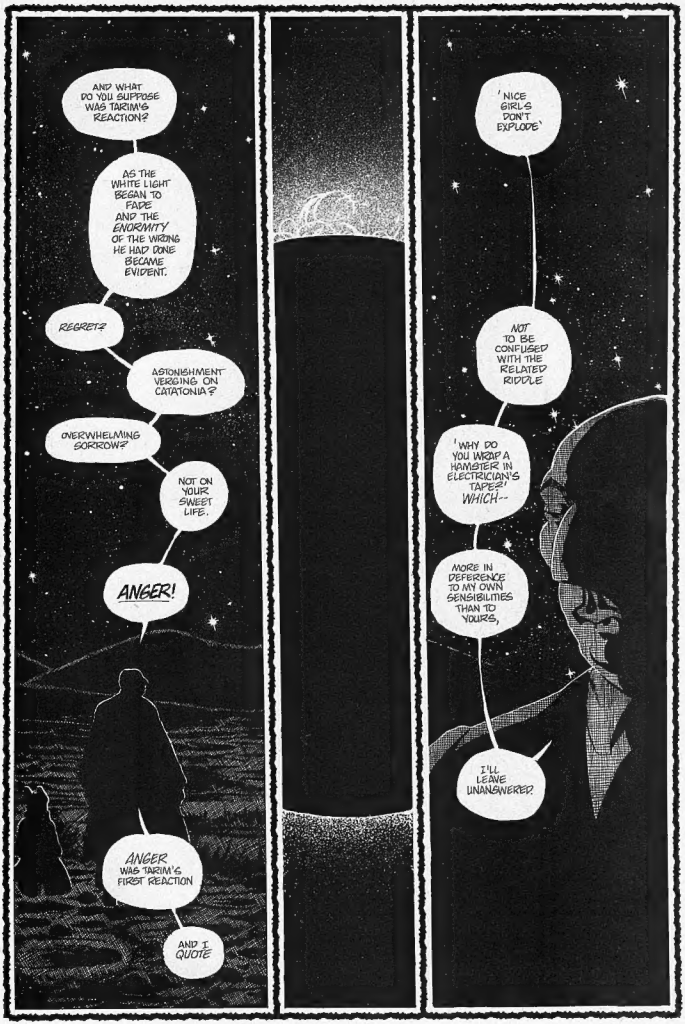
PRINTED IN CANADA BY PRENEY PRINT & LITHO INC., WINDSOR, ONTARIO

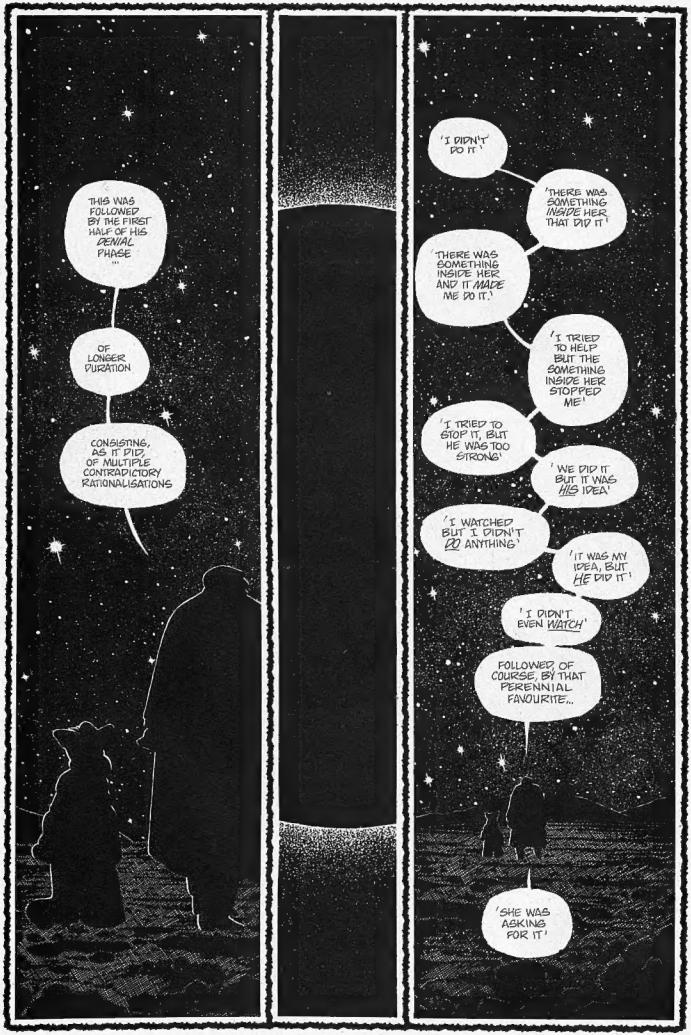
all the suns are daughters

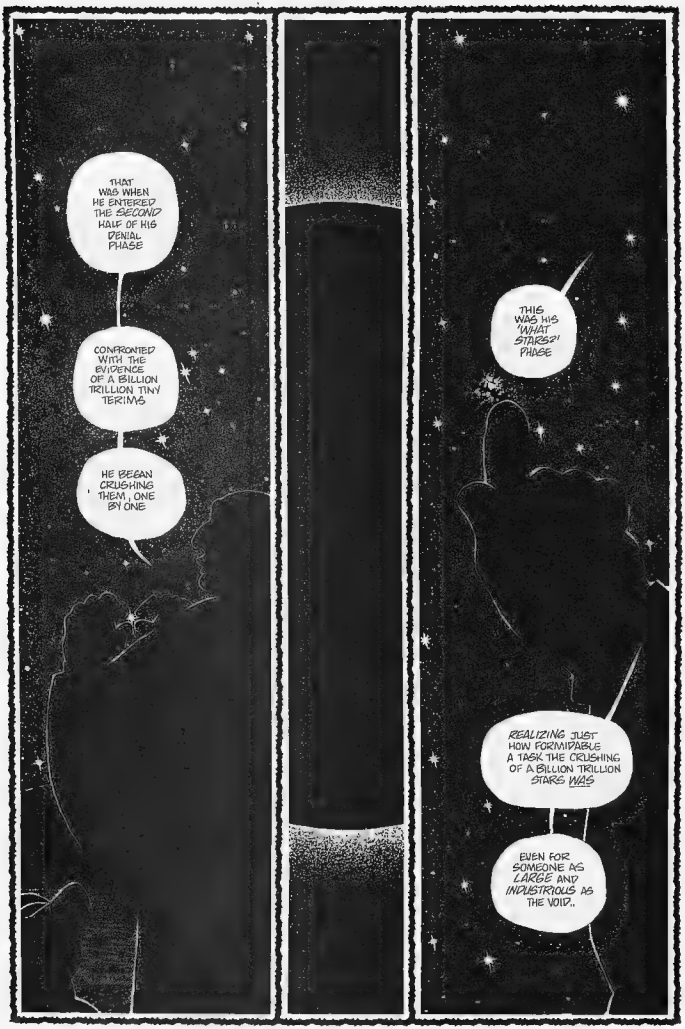




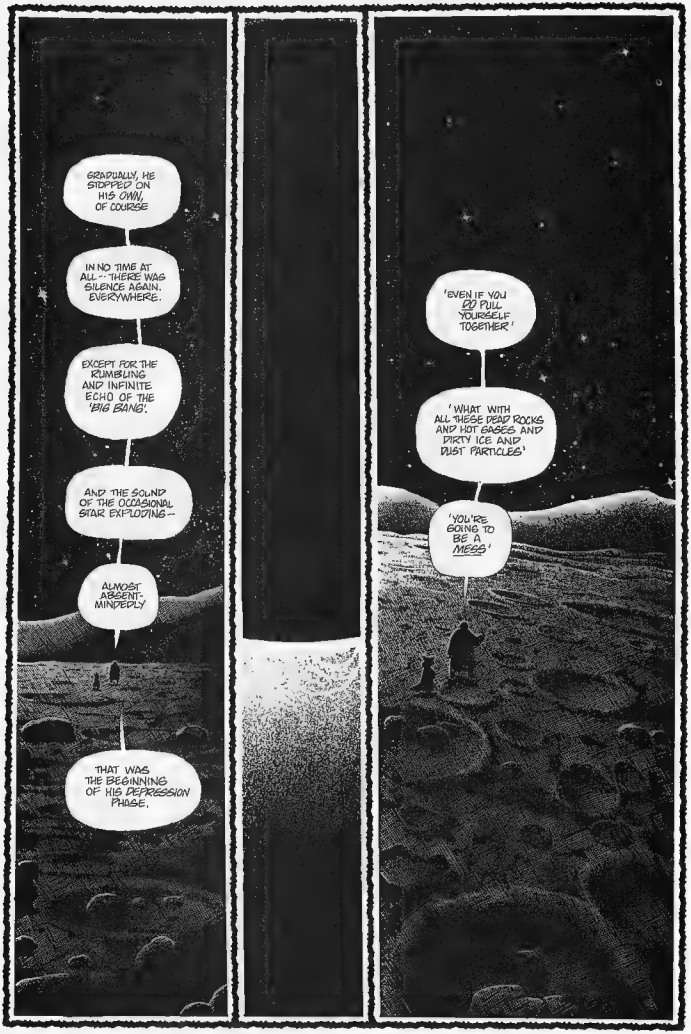

TRILLIONS AND TRILLIONS AND TRILLIONS OF BALLS OF HOT GAS...
FLEEING OUTWARD AT FANTASTIC SPEEDS.
SEARING THE FABRIC
THE FLESH
OF THE VOID.
A NEARLY INFINITE NUMBER OF HELLS WITHIN THE LIVING TARIM.
AND DEAD MATTER LIKE THE MOON HERE.
ICE.
DUST PARTICLES.
GASES SO COLD THEY'VE GONE TO LIQUID.


AND WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE WAS TARIM'S REACTION?
AS THE WHITE LIGHT BEGAN TO FADE AND THE ENORMITY OF THE WRONG HE HAD DONE BECAME EVIDENT.
REGRET?
ASTONISHMENT VERGING ON CATATONIA?
OVERWHELMING SORROW?
NOT ON YOUR SWEET LIFE.
ANGER!
ANGER WAS TARIM'S FIRST REACTION
AND I QUOTE
'NICE GIRLS DON'T EXPLODE'
NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE RELATED RIDDLE
'WHY DO YOU WRAP A HAMMER IN ELECTRICIAN'S TAPE?' WHICH--
MORE IN DEFERENCE TO MY OWN SENSIBILITIES THAN TO YOURS,
I'LL LEAVE UNANSWERED


THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY THE FIRST HALF OF HIS DENIAL PHASE ...
OF LONGER DURATION
CONSISTING, AS IT DID, OF MULTIPLE CONTRADICTORY RATIONALISATIONS
'I DIDN'T DO IT'
'THERE WAS SOMETHING INSIDE HER THAT DID IT'
'THERE WAS SOMETHING INSIDE HER AND IT MADE ME DO IT.'
'I TRIED TO HELP BUT THE SOMETHING INSIDE HER STOPPED ME'
'I TRIED TO STOP IT, BUT HE WAS TOO STRONG'
'WE DID IT BUT IT WAS HIS IDEA'
'I WATCHED BUT I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING'
'IT WAS MY IDEA, BUT HE DID IT'
'I DIDN'T EVEN WATCH'
FOLLOWED OF COURSE, BY THAT PERENNIAL FAVOURITE...
'SHE WAS ASKING FOR IT'

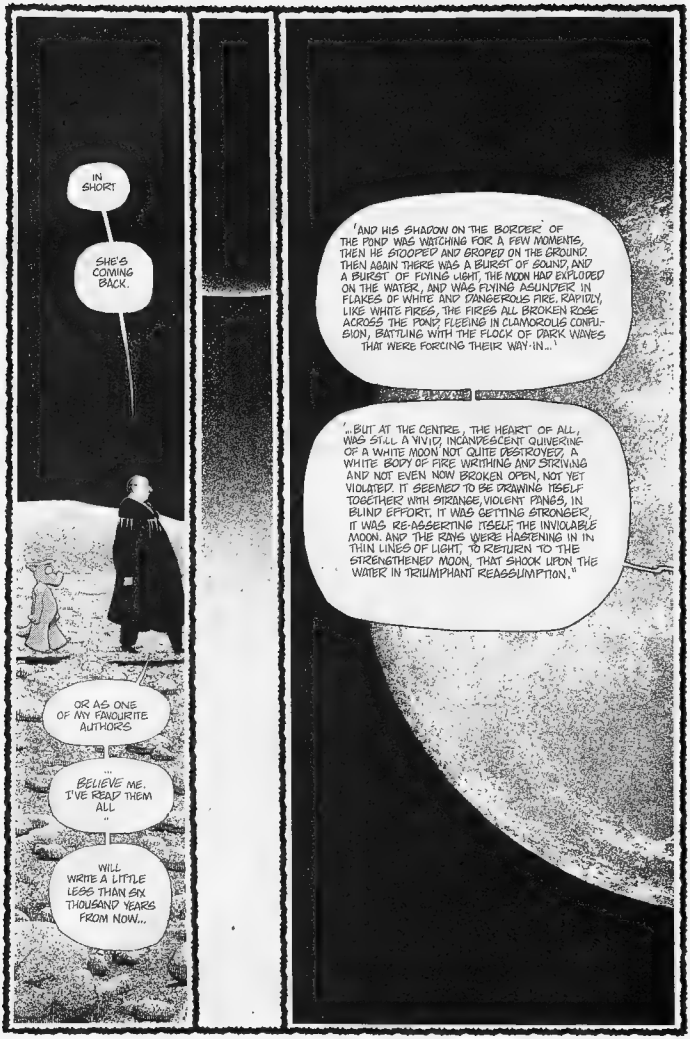

THAT WAS WHEN HE ENTERED THE SECOND HALF OF HIS DENIAL PHASE
CONFRONTED WITH THE EVIDENCE OF A BILLION TRILLION TINY TERIMS
HE BEGAN CRUSHING THEM, ONE BY ONE
THIS WAS HIS 'WHAT STARS?' PHASE
REALIZING JUST HOW FORMIDABLE A TASK THE CRUSHING OF A BILLION TRILLION STARS WAS
EVEN FOR SOMEONE AS LARGE AND INDUSTRIOUS AS THE VOID..

HE ENTERED HIS BARGAINING PHASE
'I'LL STOP SQUEEZING YOUR LIGHTS IF YOU'LL PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER'


GRADUALLY, HE STOPPED ON HIS OWN, OF COURSE
IN NO TIME AT ALL -- THERE WAS SILENCE AGAIN. EVERYWHERE.
EXCEPT FOR THE RUMBLING AND INFINITE ECHO OF THE 'BIG BANG'.
AND THE SOUND OF THE OCCASIONAL STAR EXPLODING --
ALMOST ABSENT-MINDEDLY
THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF HIS DEPRESSION PHASE.
'EVEN IF YOU DO PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER'
'WHAT WITH ALL THESE DEAD ROCKS AND HOT GASES AND DIRTY ICE AND DUST PARTICLES'
'YOU'RE GOING TO BE A MESS'

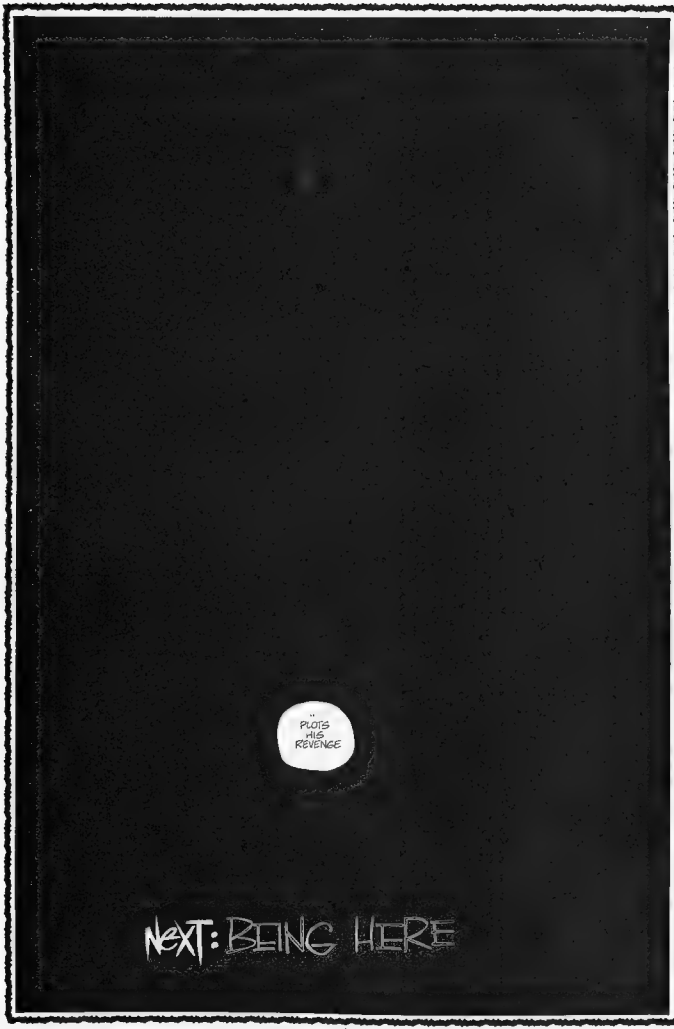
FINALLY...
...INEVITABLY.
ACCEPTANCE.
'SHE'S DEAD.'
'AND SHE'S NEVER COMING BACK.'

FIRST, THAT ALTHOUGH FILLED WITH SUPER-HEATED GASES...
THE UNIVERSE IS COOLING.
WHICH HE BELIEVES
UNTIL A LITTLE LESS THAN SIX THOUSAND YEARS FROM NOW, WHEN THE SAME BRIGHT FELLOWS WHO FIGURED OUT THE 'BIG BANG' MAKE TWO MORE DISCOVERIES...
AND SECOND
ALTHOUGH EXPANDING
THE UNIVERSE'S EXPANSION IS SLOWING


IN SHORT
SHE'S COMING BACK.
OR AS ONE OF MY FAVOURITE AUTHORS
...
BELIEVE ME, I'VE READ THEM ALL
..
WILL WRITE A LITTLE LESS THAN SIX THOUSAND YEARS FROM NOW...
'AND HIS SHADOW ON THE BORDER' OF THE POND WAS WATCHING FOR A FEW MOMENTS, THEN HE STOOPED AND GROPED ON THE GROUND. THEN AGAIN THERE WAS A BURST OF SOUND, AND A BURST OF FLYING LIGHT, THE MOON HAD EXPLODED ON THE WATER, AND WAS FLYING ASUNDER IN FLAKES OF WHITE AND DANGEROUS FIRE. RAPIDLY, LIKE WHITE FIRES, THE FIRES ALL BROKEN ROSE ACROSS THE POND, FLEEING IN CLAMOROUS CONFUSION, BATTLING WITH THE FLOCK OF DARK WAVES THAT WERE FORCING THEIR WAY IN..'
'..BUT AT THE CENTRE, THE HEART OF ALL, WAS STILL A VIVID, INCANDESCENT QUIVERING OF A WHITE MOON NOT QUITE DESTROYED, A WHITE BODY OF FIRE WRITHING AND STRIVING AND NOT EVEN NOW BROKEN OPEN, NOT YET VIOLATED. IT SEEMED TO BE DRAWING ITSELF TOGETHER WITH STRANGE, VIOLENT PANGS, IN BLIND EFFORT. IT WAS GETTING STRONGER, IT WAS RE-ASSERTING ITSELF, THE INVIOLABLE MOON. AND THE RING WERE HASTENING IN IN THIN LINES OF LIGHT, TO RETURN TO THE STRENGTHENED MOON, THAT SHOOK UPON THE WATER IN TRIUMPHANT REASSUMPTION."

SOME DAY ...
SHE IS COMING BACK.

PART OF THE VOID PLANS THEIR REUNION...
...PART OF THE VOID?..


PLOTS HIS REVENGE
NEXT: BEING HERE

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G4R2

Dear Dave,

I have just finished reading my entire collection of Cerebus (#71 to 101) and have come to the realization that I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT IN THE HELL'S GOING ON!! Now, admittedly, I am a latecomer to the proceedings (and I'm also aware of your "tough luck" attitude towards latecomers), but can't you do something? From time to time I've been able to pick up pieces of the puzzle (and I graciously thank Zonker Clark for his brief summary of Church and State in the "Comment" in issue #84), but nothing's put it all together. Names keep creeping up out of nowhere, events relate and re-relate back and forth and every time I think I have a handle on things, it turns out I don't. I'm realistic enough not to expect a summary of everything, but how about a list of important names and a one-sentence description of their importance in the Sim Scheme of Things?

After all, Dave, if you keep expecting the circulation of Cerebus to continue growing and remain high, there are going to be a whole lot of us latecomers, all lost and writing to you for answers. Wouldn't it be easier to just have one issue with a "Comment" that had a brief Who's Who type of deal for people to be pointed to? Needless to say, I think so.

(So, granted, the simple solution would be for me to buy up all the remaining back issues and thereby have all those answers at my very fingertips. Unfortunately, rent, bills, student loans, my wife's student loans, our car payments and other such unpleasantries of life keep me from spending the somewhere-under-a-thousand-dollars to do all that. Hell, right now I can't even afford all of your reprint books. I'm betting I'm not the only one, either).

And, while I have your attention . . .

Even though I often feel lost in Iest, I am enjoying the hell out of Cerebus. Aside from your wonderful sense of humour, I have to tell you that I think your artistic abilities (as well as those of Ger) are great. However, when Jerry Siegel (THE Jerry Siegel of Superman fame) praised your ART in #76, you backed off saying ". . . if Cerebus is Art we're going to find something else to call Shakespeare."

Well, ya see, Dave, it's like this. What I've been seeing in the 30 or so Cerebi I own is just that — Art. In fact, you have at times, floored me with your ability. The first time came with the first issues I bought — #85 & 86. I am referring, of course, to Cerebus' reaction to Prince Mick's "special blend . . . 'alf whiskey, 'alf codeine". Although I have never had such a "blend" myself, there have been things that have come close. In fact, on page eleven, panel five (where Cerebus is trying to speak through it all) brought back many fond memories.

And, keeping things in Perspective, Dave, keep in mind that Shakespeare was originally written and performed for the illiterate masses, most of whom were sitting in the Globe Theatre happily soused on the ales that were sold before and during the shows.

Tom Franklin
10K Talcott Forest Road,
Farmington, CT., 06032

There's *an idea. Point of purchase ale kegs in comic shops with the Cerebus logo on them.*

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave,

I didn't read Cerebus but now I do. I wish I had before but I don't think I even collected comics when #1 came out. Only maybe I did, but the shop where I used to wouldn't even carry a new title till the first 5 issues went platinum. So I missed alot of stuff like this pig, and the turtles, and the bear. Now I buy multiple copies. But not why you think. I only (usually) buy comics that I'll read. So I read each of the copies separately. I do! And when I'm old and grey I can tell my kids I was around for #100! And to prove it, I'll whip out a copy to let them look at . . . but not touch.

"Mass without substance" . . . is that writing comics?

JZ
152 Melody Dr.,
Akron, OH., 44321

Or a Catholic service where someone forgot to bring the Host.

An open letter to all the people who keep bitching and moaning about Dave and His Attitude and Dave and His Drinking and Dave and His Grass Smoking and, yes, even Dave and The Way He Talks To The Distributors:

Remember when people used to write to this book and talk about the story? Remember Mike Bannon and Derek McCulloch? Okay, bad examples, but the point I'm trying to make is this: What kind of person Dave Sim is doesn't make a goddamn bit of difference! So he's got an attitude. Big friggin' deal, lots of people have an attitude. Joe Rubinstein has an attitude. Harlan Ellison has an attitude. Max Collins has an attitude. Who gives a shit, really? Does Dave's attitude in any way diminish the quality of the book? Does his drinking diminish the quality of the book? Does the odd bit of weed every now and then diminish the quality of the book? Not that I've been able to tell, and I've been reading this book for six years now. Jesus Christ, folks, if you can't read the letter column or the Note from the President without having a stroke, then quit reading them! The whole point of that $1.70 U.S./$2.00 CDN/£1 UK you're spending every month is **supposed** to be the goddamn **story**!!

And let's not forget, gang, this story is gonna go on for a little over fifteen more years, all by the same writer/artist. No fill-ins, no reprints, no office politics, just 20 pages of Dave until issue 300. Maybe you don't realize what an awesome commitment that is. Remember George Perez saying he wanted to do 100 issues of THE NEW TEEN TITANS? He did, oh, let's check the files . . . 38 . . . and 5 is 43 . . . and 9 more and a miniseries and two annuals, that makes 57. John Byrne was gonna do 103 FANTASTIC FOUR's one more than Lee and Kirby, right? He did 31. Now he says he wants to do a hundred SUPERMAN's. Do any of us really think we're gonna see John Byrne's name in the credits of a SUPERMAN comic in 1995? I don't. But I'm pretty sure that right around the time I pick up SUPERMAN #101 by whoever and whoever else or ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #525 by another couple of whoevers I'll be picking up CEREBUS #203 by Dave and probably Gerhard.

But I'm getting away from the point here . . . I think everybody is kind of losing their grip on what matters here. The book is **by** Dave Sim, not **about** him. Lighten up, okay?

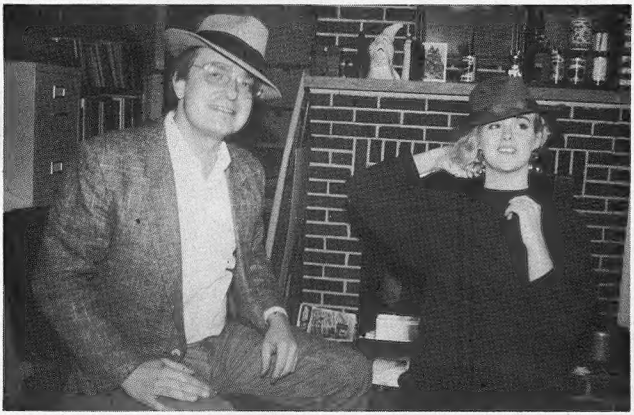
By the way, I have a Dave story too. I met him on the U.S. Tour in '82. It was at Geppi's Comic World in Silver Spring. I got there about 20 minutes before closing, my copy of SWORDS Vol. 4 under my arm, and found Dave seated at a small table doing a sketch

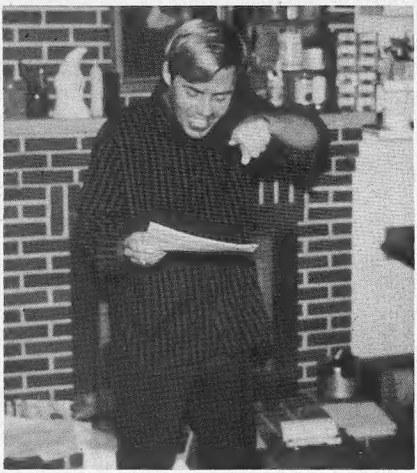
while pleasantly conversing with eight or ten fans. He smiled, he chatted, he signed a couple of autographs (no loaded briefcases in sight this time), even did a quick little Cerebus head next to mine (in the fall of '82 I was a jobless student and couldn't spare the bucks for a sketch). He even looked at a couple of pieces of my art (two pages of Cerebus with Jaka, Turg and E'Lass and about half a bottle's worth of black backgrounds) and made generally positive comments. Now, I don't know how long he'd been there, but he seemed glad to be there and made a much better impression than some other pro's I've met over the years.

Not much of a story, really, but I figured it'd be a nice change from the usual vitriol.

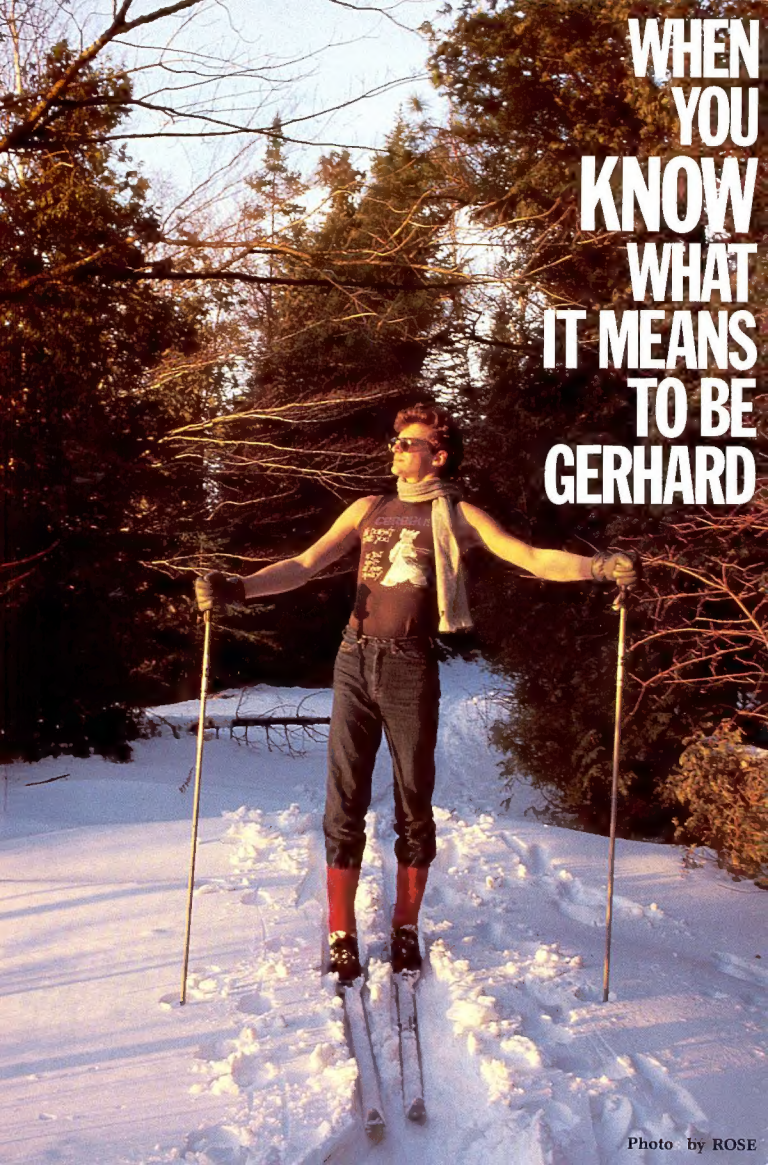
Paul Balze
115 Crest Avenue
Glen Burnie, MD., 21061

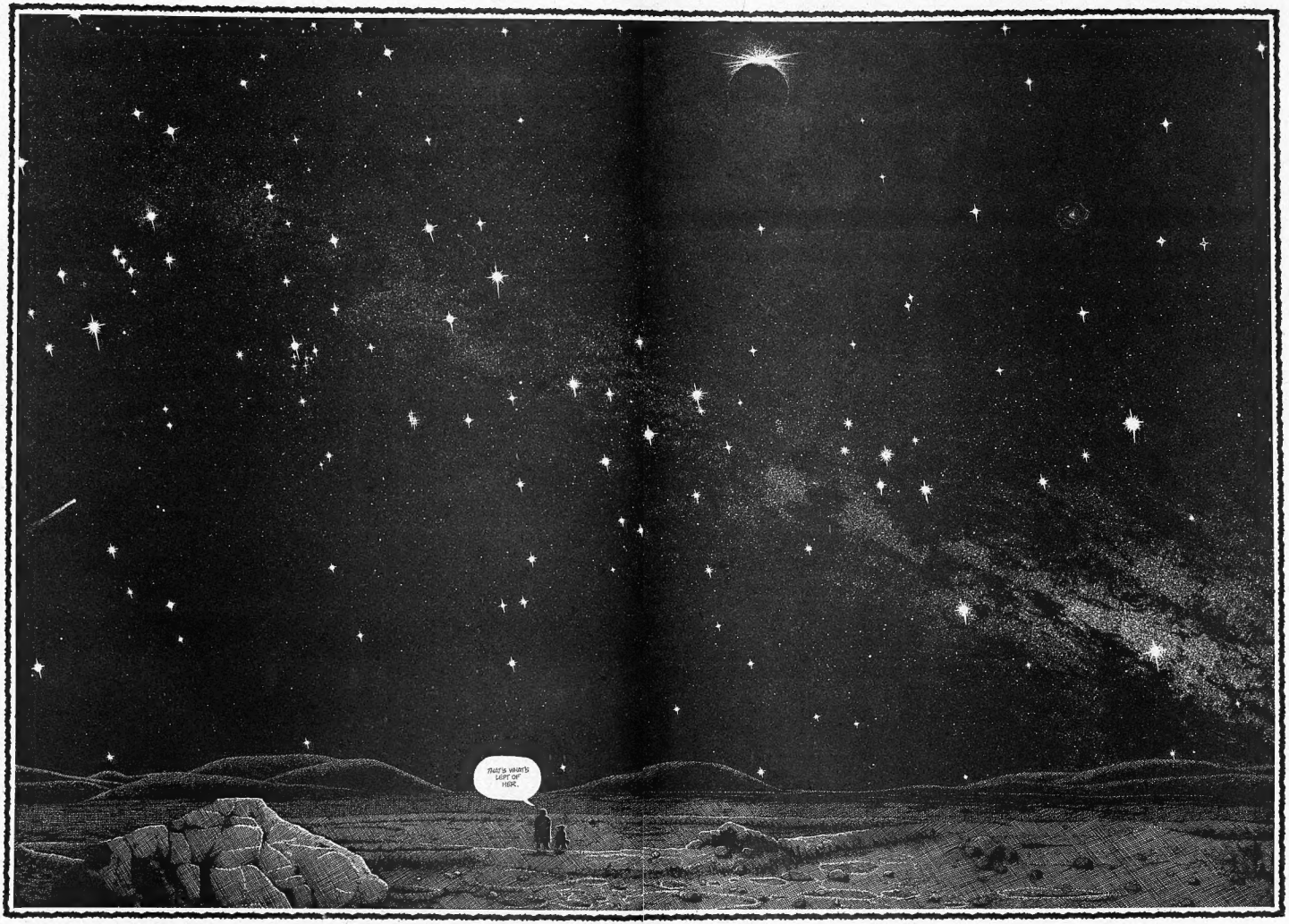
You were wearing blue jeans, right?





"THE MAKING OF 104" REVISITED: Bob Burden and Atlanta model Shannon (above) in Bob's "Fun with Hats" segment. That's me (right) trying to keep a straight face while reading Bob Burden's "Fuck Poem" and failing miserably.


WHEN
YOU
KNOW
WHAT
IT MEANS
TO BE
GERHARD
Photo by ROSE


THAT'S WHAT'S LEFT OF HER.